How to create new variables & recode existing variables in SPSS

To create a new variable

- Go to Transform > Compute Variable. The Target Variable is the new variable.
- Click Type & Label to set up labels and data type.
- Insert a numeric expression and/or an existing variable in the box—this is what the new variable will be equal to. Click the If button to compute the variable only for specific cases.

Tip:
When calculating a new variable based on existing variable(s), watch out for missing values! Especially for mean or sum functions—think about whether the new computed values are legitimate if missing values are present.

To recode an existing variable

- Go to Transform > Recode Into Different Variables. This will create a new variable—choose Recode into Same Variables if you want to overwrite the contents of the existing variable.
- Select the variable you want to recode and insert it in the recode box. Enter the name for the new variable under Output Variable. Click the Change button. Now you will see oldvar --> newvar in the recode box.
- Click the Old and New Values button. Type in the old value(s)—this can be a single value, a range of values, or missing values. Then type in the corresponding new value—this can be a single value or missing values. Click the Add button, and you will see the oldval --> newval listed in the Old – New box.
- Click Continue when you have entered all the value recodes.
- Click OK to run the recode

To delete a variable

Open the Variable View in the Data Window, select the variable, and press Delete. Use the Undo button if you make a mistake.